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V.3 no 4  
1909

# Howard University Record

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November, 1909

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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Addresses by  
President Taft  
Secretary Ballinger  
Commissioner Macfarland  
Dr. Booker T. Washington



# HOWARD UNIVERSITY RECORD

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Addresses by

President William Howard Taft, the  
Secretary of Interior, Mr. Ballinger and  
Commissioner H. B. F. Macfarland  
Dr. Booker T. Washington

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE.

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November, 1909

Howard University Press  
Washington, D. C.

# HOWARD UNIVERSITY RECORD

HOWARD UNIVERSITY RECORD: Published by Howard University in January, March, June, and November. Subscription price, one year, twenty-five cents. Entered at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., as second class mail matter.

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Volume 3 WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER, 1909 Number 4

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Address of the President  
**WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, LL. D.**  
At the Commencement of Howard University  
and the Laying of the Cornerstone of  
the Carnegie Library  
May, 26, 1909

*From the Washington Post*

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EMPHASIZING the belief that it is morally obligatory upon the white American to uplift and guide the black; declaring the present the most propitious era in the history of the Negro's advancement; pledging his support as the chief executive of the nation to conserve the best interests of the race once in bondage and repay the debt owed it for past injustices; favoring higher education for a few Negroes, because education will solve the race problem but believing that the majority must depend upon manual labor, President Taft thrilled a mixed audience of two thousand persons who gathered in the chapel and corridors of Howard University to hear his address yesterday afternoon. The President's remarks were punctuated with outbursts of applause.

In addition to this address, President Taft personally presented a hundred and fifty diplomas to as many Negro men and women, graduates of the University, delivered an address at the cornerstone laying for the Carnegie library, and spread the mortar which will hold the cornerstone in place.

Prayer was offered by the Reverend Charles Wood, pastor of the Church of the Covenant,

## PRESIDENT TAFT'S ADDRESS

"Mr. President:

"I have a good many engagements and I am tempted into them sometimes before I realize the engagements are to be met and the work is to be done, by such a mellifluous and forcible gentleman as your President; and then I am not reminded of the obligation thus assumed until I pick up the morning paper and find myself advanced as one of the chief attractions at some meeting where I do not feel myself at all as entitled to figure in that capacity." When your President came to me and asked me to come to Howard University, he said that he expected to celebrate the laying of the cornerstone of the new building here given by Mr. Carnegie and that incidentally there would be Commencement Exercises. I am a fairly good hand at a trowel and I thought possibly I might engage in the exercises of laying the cornerstone without being involved in a speech but I find it to be otherwise. Nevertheless, I am glad to seize the opportunity to look into your faces, you young men and women who are about to go out into the world and meet the obstacles which are before you and to overcome them successfully as I sincerely hope you may. I am glad to be able to be here to testify to you my fervent interest in your careers and my hope that you all may be successful.

*"This institution here is the partial repayment of a debt—only partial—to a race to which the government and the people of the United States are eternally indebted. They brought that race into this country against its will. They planted it here irretrievably. They first put it in bondage, and then they kept it in the ignorance that that bondage seemed to make necessary, under the system then in vogue. Then they freed it, and put upon it the responsibilities of citizenship. Now some sort of obligation follows that chain of facts with reference to the people who are responsible for what that government did. The obligation would be clearer, or rather, the method of its discharge would be easier, were it not for our constitutional system, which throws generally upon the states the burden of education, and leaves to the general government only certain limited jurisdictions with respect to the people. However, in so far as the District*

of Columbia is concerned, and the establishment of institutions of learning in this District, **we are free from any embarrassment with respect to carrying out the obligation, and it is fitting that the government of the United States should assume the obligation of the establishment and maintenance of a first-class university for the education of colored men.**

"I am far from saying—and I wish to put in this caveat in advance, in order not to be met by an argument which has weight but has not weight when improperly used—that the colored race today, all of them, would be better off if they all had university education. I think they would be in a very bad way if they had, because they would not know how to use it, and they would not find means of using it. No race would be better off if they were all educated as university men. The great body of the colored race, as the great body of the white race, must depend for their livelihood upon their manual labor, skilled or unskilled, or upon some occupation which requires less education than that which is conferred by a university, and if it is too widely extended the effect of it is to put a lot of men into life who do not find occupations which are suited to their taste, and to make them unhappy and really not fit for the life which is before them.

#### RACE LEADERSHIP NECESSARY

"On the other hand, that admission is far from a concession that it is not necessary for the success of the colored race that there be among them leaders of *that race fitted by university education for that leadership*. There is not any likelihood, with deference to persons who occupy a different position, that either in the generosity of the general government or in the generosity of individuals who found colored colleges and universities, there is to be such an opportunity given as is likely to lead too many colored men to acquire university education as compared with the number of colored men that there are in the community and especially south of Mason and Dixon's line. The opportunity that there is for educated colored men to aid their race in the struggle before them for economic success and the maintenance of themselves as worthy and valuable members of the com



munity, the opportunity that there is for university men among men to assist in that movement, I say is very great indeed.

#### SOUTH NEEDS NEGRO DOCTORS

"Through the South one of the things that is essential is the cultivation of greater sanitation and greater attention to the laws of hygiene among the colored race. What we need in the south is a great many more physicians of their own race to tell them how to live and to enable them to recover in sickness. I am glad to offer to the young doctors to whom I am addressing myself an opportunity for a successful livelihood as physicians in the growing southern communities where there are so many colored people coming to the front, and where physicians well educated are able to make a good livelihood on the one hand, and on the other to do a substantial good to their race.

#### UNIVERSITY NEEDED TO TRAIN TEACHERS

*"The benefit which teachers educated here can do for their race goes without saying. Of course the basis of the education of the colored people is in the primary schools, and in the industrial school—in schools framed after Hampton and Tuskegee, and even those less ambitious, but still furnishing an industrial development. In those schools must be introduced teachers from such university institutions as this, and it is in furnishing the material for the faculties of those smaller—not smaller, but less ambitious—schools that such an institution as this shall have its chief function.*

#### WOULD EDUCATE THE MINISTRY

"Then, too, among the colored race, the ministers have a great influence. Now, if they are to wield that influence they cannot be too highly educated; they cannot know too much in order that they may carry on their sacred functions and discharge them to the highest benefit of the race.

"I say these things with a good deal of emphasis; because I know there are many who dispute the wisdom of large contributions to universities of the colored race like this, and at one time I was very much perplexed with the argument to know whether or not it was proper. But what is the fact? There are four universities in this country, besides Howard University, devoted



to the colored race; those are Lincoln, Fisk, Atlanta, and Talladega, and they have not, taken together, an endowment that exceeds \$250,000. Now when you consider that there are ten million Negroes in this country, you see how utterly inadequate, even for the education of the leaders, those universities, together with this, are, and there is opportunity for the founding of more, or certainly for the enlargement of this, as *Congress and the people of the United States shall understand the useful part that this institution and institutions like it play in the real uplifting and onward progress of the race.*

"I am delighted to think, because I have been in the South a good deal of late and have studied some of the conditions there, that they are getting better and better for the Negro race in certain respects that are not published to the world, but that really affect very much the conditions of those who live there."

#### CHANGED CONDITIONS DOWN SOUTH

"In all the growing communities of the South—I mean where there is a touch of the modern and a touch of progress and a touch of civilization—the white men of progress are beginning to appreciate the advantage of having a class like the colored men that they have there. They are anxious that they have an industrial education. They are anxious that they should make their way in the world and show their usefulness in the community. The truth is that the greatest hope that the Negro has, because he lives chiefly in the South, is the friendship and the sympathy of the white men with whom he lives in that neighbourhood. I know it is not the habit to think so, but it is growing and one of the things that misleads us most is the desperate, the extreme statements of white men from the South on the subject, but really they don't mean what they say. They have a theory that it may give them sometimes a little boost politically to talk in extremes and superlatives, but I have heard expressions from leading Negroes in various cities that confirm my judgment that the situation is growing better and better.

"I remember hearing the Rev. Dr. John Walker, that Negro who went abroad and preached in Spurgeons's pulpit and was worthy to preach in that pulpit, express his friendship

for the white people of Augusta, where I spent five or six weeks, and express his view of the proposition that the Negro race should be moved to some other country than this. He said that they were mighty well satisfied to live in Augusta until they went to glory, and that they did not want to go anywhere else until they did go to glory.

*"The fact is that the progress of the race is outlining itself with great clearness, to me at least, in making itself a useful part of the community where it is, so that it shall not only awaken an altruistic spirit or spirit of humanity, but, what is a good deal better to tie to, shall awaken the economic spirit of those with whom you live and who value your services as members of the community and know how much you add to its success by being there and being valuable members of that community in accumulation, in your providence and in making the homes that are made in a successful community of Negroes in the South.*

*"It seems to me that the future is in the hands of the race itself. I do not mean to say that cruelties are not to exist in the future, and injustices, and a great many reasons why complaints should be made against the inhumanity of man, but I do mean to say that there never has been a time in the history of the Negro race when the future offered such a basis for belief in your success as a race and for the belief that you have it in your hands to make that success as it is to-day.*

**"Everything that I can do as an executive in the way of helping along this University I expect to do. I expect to do it because I believe it is a debt of the people of the United States, it is an obligation of the Government of the United States, and it is money constitutionally applied to that which shall work out in the end the solution of one of the great problems that God has put upon the people of the United States."**

PRAISE FOR THE LIBRARY

After the Rev. Dr. John Garner had pronounced the benediction, President Taft, escorted by the Engineer Corps Band, Capt. Archie Butt, President Wilbur P. Thirkield, Commissioner Macfarland, the Haitian minister, and a number of prominent

Negro educators from different states, walked from the chapel to the site on which the library will be erected.

A crowd of about five thousand persons surrounded the foundation of the building to hear the President's remarks and witness the ceremonies. Mr. Taft, after being presented to the assemblage, stood in a fine rain with bared head and made a few remarks. He said:

"I made my speech in the chapel, and I am only here to contribute one step in the ceremony and the work of construction of this building, a library for a university. A university without a library is really a very weak institution. I have no doubt that you have one, but it is well to have it in such proportion and with such facilities for study that those who are in the university may use the books there as fully and completely as possible. I congratulate you, the alumni, the members, and the friends of this University that private generosity has extended your university in this direction and given you such an instrument for its usefulness as will doubtless add greatly to the progress of the university."

#### PRESIDENT TAFT SCATTERS MORTAR

The President then went to the suspended cornerstone seized a brand new silver trowel with the abandon of an experienced "Mason" and began smearing mortar under the block of stone. After depositing a large pile of mortar under the stone, Mr. Taft began scattering it. Later he requested Secretary Ballinger to "take a hand in this, but don't spoil the job," and a similar invitation to Commissioner Macfarland, to the Haitian minister, and to President Thirkield. With the singing of "America," in which Mr. Taft joined lustily, the exercises were brought to a close, and the President departed, as he arrived, with the plaudits of an admiring throng ringing in his ears.

At the close of the address by the President, Secretary Ballinger was called out and was enthusiastically received. He said he had watched the development of the University, and felt sure that the fruits of the institution would benefit the country.

## Impromptu Speech of the Secretary of Interior, Mr. Ballinger

"It is a source of deep gratification to me to be here on this occasion and see the development of this institution and the fruits of what has been done by the government. I realize the obligation and debt which this country owes to the colored man, as has been so beautifully expressed by the President, and, knowing the earnestness with which he feels the obligation which rests upon the people of this country, I feel, as an officer of the government to whom certain functions have been entrusted in connection with this institution, that it will not only be a great pleasure but it will be one of my most earnest efforts to do everything I can to further the best interests of this institution."

## Address of Honorable H. B. F. Macfarland

President Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia

At the Breaking of Ground for the Carnegie

Library April 17, 1909

"Mr. President, Teachers, Students and Friends:

"It is always a great pleasure for me to take part in any of the exercises of Howard University and to testify on any occasion to the high value of the education which it gives. I remember very well the installation service. I remember very well the pleasure which Mr. Carnegie showed as the President has said. And I am not at all surprised that this Library is to grow on this campus because of what you showed him the University was doing. You have well earned the building which is to rise here. And you have *made it plain to the Congress of the United States by the work which you have done and by the services which your graduates have rendered* throughout the country and throughout the possessions of the United States, so that you are about to have a Science Building to cost \$90,000 which will greatly add to your facilities. We of the District of Columbia take pride, local pride, in this institution. We are very glad that you have this beautiful hill; that you have saved it from possible destruction and that it is and will always be a link

in the park system of the District of Columbia. We are very glad that you are to have from time to time new and more beautiful buildings, but we are especially glad that through all the years, no matter what the kind of buildings you have had, with such men as presidents, as trustees, as members of the faculty, and such young men and women as students, you are to build here a moral edifice finer than can be built with brick and stone. We are glad of *the reputation which this University has* wherever the name is known. General Howard, for whom it was named, thinks I know from what he has said to me, that it will be his greatest title to fame that this University founded by him bears his name to all the future.

"*Mr. Carnegie has already done much for Washington*, and he is willing to do more. He gave the beautiful building which houses the Public Library of the District of Columbia, and he is willing to give as many branches auxiliary to that central library as the Congress of the United States will receive. We of the District of Columbia have asked Congress to receive these branch libraries and provide for their maintenance, and we are hoping that the time will come when all over the District there may be these branches for the use of the people. He has given the money for that noble building now rising at the opening of the Potomac Park at the foot of Seventeenth Street to be the home of the Bureau of American Republics, with all its far-reaching and benevolent influences; and on Sixteenth Street he has almost completed the home of the Carnegie Institution, which is doing in original research such splendid scientific work.

"Now here on this hill, commanding a view of the Capitol and of the whole District of Columbia, you are to have this fine Library Building. We congratulate you, we rejoice with you. We believe in the future of this institution; in the thousands and thousands of students who are to come here, who are to share in its benefits, who are to enjoy that training for the higher learning which we all believe to be essential, believing in industrial training and all other forms of education for the Negro, and that here there should be this University for the training of the leaders of the teachers, of the professional men and women of the future. We believe that these students who are to come in all the

years that stretch before us shall find on this spot the very life-blood of the master minds of the world, and in that, their instruction and inspiration for noble service and noble living."

Justice Barnard introduced Secretary of the Interior Ballinger as one in whom we have the successor of our old friend Secretary Garfield and the hope and promise of a true and generous friend for the present and the future. He spoke as follows:

## Address of the Honorable R. A. Ballinger Secretary of the Interior

"My Friends: I came out here this afternoon expecting to listen to your President and your Faculty on this occasion. In other words, I came here to learn and not to speak. I always, however, get into these difficulties. As I look about me and see your faces, I recall some of my younger experiences when I was a lad; and it takes me back to Vicksburg in Mississippi, where my father commanded a colored regiment during the Civil War. I spent a few months there as a drummer boy with the colored boys of that regiment. I was not much of a soldier, for I was about so high, but my recollections are vivid and pleasant for that association, strange as it may seem. When I went to fitting school, preparing for college, in Topeka, Kansas, two of my classmates were colored men. One of them was Andrew D. Hart, whom many of you know, who lived in Cincinnati, and was a very eloquent man in his college days, and I used to join with him in our male quartet as a very poor singer. I merely mention these matters of personal incident to show you that I know the Negro, having had some association with him, and from my earliest days *my sympathies have been with their struggles for uplifting the race*, for advancing intellectually and morally throughout this country, and I appreciate, perhaps, more than most people the difficulties that surround your efforts for advancement and progress. I appreciate the prejudice you have to contend with, and it has always been a source of regret to me that the colored man has not had an even chance with the white man throughout the entire United States. But here I congratulate you that you have this institution. I congratulate the



Country that here can be laid the foundation for character; that here can be laid the foundation for individual advancement, and you should be able to get in this beautiful location and with the facilities of this institution the very highest inspiration for educational, religious, and moral development. This country needs the character which is infused into the race through the efforts of this institution, and whatever I can do while I am officially connected with this work to advance your interests and *promote to the highest degree the efforts* that have been so nobly undertaken here, I wish you to know that it shall be undertaken with the utmost zeal."

Abstract of  
Address by Dr. Booker T. Washington  
At the Annual Opening of the School of Medicine,  
Monday, October, 4, 1909

It is a rare privilege to be permitted to stand in this presence to speak to this fine body of men and women; and as I stand here I cannot but recall, as the President has already recalled, a few of the names of the men who have made this day and this institution and this special department of this institution possible. And I know as we meet here this morning at the forty-second formal opening of the School of Medicine that all of our minds and hearts, for that matter, go back to the day when the great men in earnest self-sacrifice gave all that was best in them in order that you might sit here this morning and enjoy the privileges of a great medical school.

As I travel over this country, it has been my privilege in nearly every section that I visited, to meet graduates from the various departments of Howard University. With a few exceptions, I have found the graduates of the Medical Department doing well. I have found them standing for all that was highest and best in the communities where they live, and my special word this morning to those who are here preparing to go out into the world and follow after those who have succeeded in such a magnificent degree, is that you see to it that the standard of the profession is not lowered.



The work of a great doctor in the future is not going to be so much in curing aches and pains but, on the other hand, is in preventing diseases.

To prevent, not cure diseases in the community, that is the kind of work that I believe Howard University is standing for. The old days when the dentist devoted himself to pulling out teeth are passing away. The great work of the dentist in the future is going to be in preserving teeth—not in taking care of teeth after they have decayed but preventing the decay of teeth.

The great work of the medical doctor is not in curing a weak body but in keeping a strong body in working shape. Not only this, for the doctor of the future must be in a large degree a missionary—a person of an unselfish, wide, broad disposition.

There is a great opening in this country for a Negro doctor, dentist, and pharmacist. In all of these branches there is a tremendous opportunity—an opportunity that the average white boy graduate in a medical school does not have open for him. In your case positions and locations are seeking you. In his case, in most instances, he has to seek positions.

I am glad to say in the southern states where I have gone I have found the white doctors ready to co-operate in professional matters with the Negro doctors. With very few exceptions, I find the Negro doctors on friendly and on easy terms with the white doctors.

I think we have on a conservative estimate about three thousand, five hundred Negro physicians in America. We need at least seven thousand Negro doctors in America. That will only give about one to every seventhousand of the people and, as the President has already stated, in the case of the white race, they have one to every five or six hundred of the total population. So you see that we are a long way from the time when we will be overstocked in this country with Negro doctors.

There is a tremendous **field for the Negro nurse** in this country. We need ten times as many as are now in existence and, in the case of a Negro woman who is a nurse, she has a peculiar field; she has an exceptional opportunity.

That means that the Negro woman goes into that family she touches the mother; she touches the father, and you take the

average white family who have hired an efficient, sympathetic Negro nurse; let that Negro nurse, with her intelligence, with her refinement, go into that family and remain there for three or four weeks, and when she leaves, in every case without exception, she leaves the family thoroughly converted to the ideas of Negro education. Why these Negro nurses can do more to bring about a change of feeling in the white people of the south than President Thirkield, myself, or all the other presidents put together can do. Wherever they go, they make converts for the cause of Negro education. We need, then, that the number of nurses shall be increased until we shall have at least ten thousand Negro nurses in this country.

And, my friends, in order that the race may be saved while it is passing through this crucial test, while it is passing through this change, **the Negro doctor must take the lead** in the preservation of the bodies of our people. I do not believe that the Negro is going to disappear as a race of people. Here and there, the death rate may be higher than the birth rate, but I believe that the Negro race is going to continue growing in numbers and to grow in strength for I do not believe that God, in his good providence, never permits any race to increase in numbers unless he has some great purpose for that race to fulfill.

They used to say that there were certain diseases from which the Negro was immune. They used to say he could not have yellow fever. Now he has anything he wants to have.

As I have gone in and out among our doctors, I found them as I have stated, leading clean and useful lives. Wherever I have found them in any degree as failures, it has been because of inadequate academic scientific ground work for their professional training and President Thirkield, as I understand it, (and I believe the trustees are going to stand by him and back him up) is trying to raise the standard of entrance to this department so that we shall have here a medical school of which no man need be ashamed. And we want you to stand back of the President and the officers of that special department in lifting up the standard every year. Now you some times cheer that when it refers to the other fellow. Our people are usually in favor of higher education except when you apply it to them and then they throw cold water on you. I mean, I want you to help raise up the standard in

this special department. That is what President Thirkield is aiming at while president of this University. I believe that you will stand by him.

The success of a Negro doctor and the increase of the number of Negro doctors is not only a matter of interest to the white people but to the Negro people of this country. In many parts of the southland, the colored people are equal in numbers to the white people; in many parts of the southland, the colored people outnumber the white population. In many parts where they live side by side, it is the Negro who raises the food, who prepares the food, who serves the food. In most cases, it is Negro who launders the clothes; it is the Negro who nurses the baby; it is the Negro who touches the white family at a very vital point in the life of that white family in some respects. In other respects, there are such fundamental elements in the situation that no color line can be drawn. Filth draws no color line. Immorality draws no color line. If by reason of ignorance to the laws of health the black individual in the community has in his body the germs of consumption, inevitably that black man or black woman will carry those germs into the white family. It is impossible for that Negro to handle the white man's food, to touch the white man's child day by day without the white man being just as much affected by disease as is true of the black race. For all these reasons, it is very **important that the white people throughout this country should realize the work that Howard University is doing in sending out these Negro doctors.**

It always leads me to say I believe the time has come when the public men of this country are going to realize the tremendous importance of this work that is being done in this Medical School and that in the near future we shall have here one of the largest and best equipped of any buildings in this country. We must have that.

It is a proud privilege to go into a family where no Negro doctor has ever written a prescription before; it is a proud thing to be a pioneer; to have a colored man sit down and have his teeth treated for the first time by a Negro dentist.

In all these respects, my friends, you have a great privilege and, in pursuing and accomplishing these all, may God bless you and keep you.



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